



THE HISTORY CHANNEL® PRESENTS

The Revolution: Forging an Army

Part 6 of a 13 part original series

The American Revolution laid the foundation for the success of the United States, yet the viability of the nation was not always imminent and the quest for liberty was no simple endeavor. As the Colonists found themselves becoming increasingly independent, the fiercest and most powerful army in the world stood between them and a free, independent, sovereign America. Small skirmishes between colonists and representatives of the British throne escalated in 1775. In order to pacify what he viewed as a small rebellion, the King sent a contingent of Red Coats from the seemingly omnipotent British Army across the Atlantic Ocean. However, as the days and months progressed, the Red Coats, their military leaders and King George III himself eventually realized the ferocity, courage and collective will of the colonists they faced.

In *The Revolution: Forging an Army* we find George Washington's losses adding up, leading some in Congress to question his leadership abilities. Washington's main concern, however, is sustaining and rebuilding his ragged, starving and dwindling army through what would become the most trying, frigid winter of the war. When all looks lost at Valley Forge, Baron Von Steuben and Nathanael Greene, two men with questionable pasts, provide the Continental Army with the training and efficient supply lines it so desperately needed. With the help of these men, Washington rebuilds his army, and in doing so, his reputation, which carries him into the victory against the British at the Battle of Monmouth.

Curriculum Links

The Revolution: Forging an Army would be useful for high school and middle school classes on United States History, Military History, European History, and Colonial History. This documentary fulfills several National Standards guidelines as outlined by the National Council for History Education including: (1) Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas

and Institutions, (2) Conflict and Cooperation, (3) Patterns of Social and Political Interaction and (4) Comparative History of Major Developments.

Vocabulary

Using the dictionary at www.merriamwebster.com, an internet resource such as www.history.com, or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

Capitol
Cobbler
Dysentery
Horatio Gates
Immense

Minutia
Prussian
Ration
Rebel
Venal

Comprehension Questions

1. Where is Valley Forge? Why did Washington want to settle his army there for the winter?
2. Why was it so difficult to get supplies for the Continental soldiers? What did this say about the cohesiveness of the 13 colonies?
3. Who was Nathanael Greene? What did Washington commission him to do? What changes did Greene make to the army's existing state?
4. What was *The Ranger*? Who was John Paul Jones? What were his contributions to the development of the United States Navy?
5. What did the English think when Jones arrived off their coast? How was Jones indirectly insulted by the British?
6. Who was Frederick William Augustus Heinrich Ferdinand, Baron Von Steuben? What role did he play in training the soldiers at Valley Forge? Do you think he was a crucial figure in the war?
7. Did the soldiers have newfound confidence after the winter of 1778 at Valley Forge or were they completely disheartened?
8. Why did the British decide to abandon Philadelphia?
9. What happened at the Battle of Monmouth? Why was it an important battle for American forces?
10. What does the term Molly Pitcher mean? What role did women play in the Revolutionary War?

Fun Facts

IN DEVOTION TO COUNTRY, John Paul Jones, known today as the father of the United States Navy, shouted out "I have not yet begun to fight!" after a surrender was suggested by the British in a September, 1779 naval battle.

DID YOU KNOW the names of General Washington's horses at Valley Forge were Blueskin and Nelson?

WERE YOU AWARE that today, more than 200 years after John Paul Jones' death, there are around 381,000 active sailors, including 53,000 officers in the United States Navy?

Extended Activities

Honor

Centuries ago, men of war, officers and soldiers alike considered themselves men of honor. Out of respect to these beliefs, soldiers would not attempt to kill enemy officers or engage in "hit and run" battles. In groups of 3-5, discuss the role of honor in the Revolutionary War. Be sure to discuss why the soldiers wanted honor, how it affected battle plans, how it affected social status and who it affected most. After 15 minutes, give a quick two minute synopsis to the class of what you discussed in your group. Be sure to reveal what warrior you think was most honorable in the American Revolution.

Two Different Worlds

Although the American and British forces differed in many ways in the Revolutionary War, they were both indeed loyal and devoted to their respective causes. In a well-written, 3-5 page essay, compare and contrast the British and the Americans in the winter of 1778. What were the starkest differences between the two sides at that point? Who was in better position to win the war? Be sure to talk about the strategies of both sides and the morale of the men as the winter ended and the fighting season approached.

Resources

General Resources

The complete history of the American Revolution and the Revolutionary War:

www.americanrevolution.com/Links.htm

Emory University's website with primary sources including documents, paintings and speeches regarding the American Revolution:

<http://www.law.emory.edu/FEDERAL/conpict.html#const>

Maps from the Revolutionary War era:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/armhtml/armhome.html>

Military Resources on the American Revolution including digitized photographs of original paintings and drawings of battles:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/american-revolution/pictures/index.html>

Online Resources for *Forging an Army*

Britannica entry on Nathanael Greene : <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9037965?query=nathanael%20Greene&ct=eb>

Encarta entry on the Battle of Monmouth:
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761556744/Battle_of_Monmouth.html

Official website of Valley Forge National Park: <http://www.valleyforge.org/>

Stony Point Battlefield Historian's writings on the roll of women in the American Revolution: <http://www2.lhric.org/spbattle/wohist.html>

US History.org's website on Baron Von Steuben:
<http://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/served/steuben.html>

The United States Navy's biography on its founder John Paul Jones:
<http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/traditions/html/jpjones.html>

Books and other Resources for *Forging an Army*

Callo, Joseph. *John Paul Jones: America's First Sea Warrior*. Naval Institute Press, 2006.

Fleming, Thomas. *Washington's Secret War: The Hidden History of Valley Forge*. Collins, 2005.

Franklin, Benjamin and Blaine McCormick. *Ben Franklin*. Entrepreneur Press, 2005.

Golway, Terry. *Washington's General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution*. Owl Books, 2006.

Morrissey, Brendan and Adam Hook. *Monmouth Courthouse 1778: The Last Great Battle in the North*. Osprey Publishing, 2004.